

**WASHINGTON, DC** - Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) highlighted Maryland-relevant details of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Bill, introduced yesterday in the U.S. House of Representatives. Hoyer said

Members of Congress will continue to work on crafting the best package possible, including holding markups on the legislation next week, with the hope that the final House bill will be voted on the following week.

[Summary of bill is here](#)

"In the midst of a recession that has already cost our economy 2.6 million jobs, the need for swift action is clear," **stated Hoyer.** "The American Recovery and Reinvestment Bill will create jobs and strengthen our economy both now and in the future."

"Marylanders have seen the impact of this economic downturn in lost jobs, lost wealth and the creation of a deep hole in the state budget," **continued Hoyer.** "We need this bill to put people back to work in our state and in our country and to lift our economy out of this recession."

The unemployment rate in Maryland climbed to 5.1 percent in December 2008. While lower than the national rate of 7.2 percent, it is the highest it has been in at least five years. The economic downturn, resulting in falling state revenues and increased demand on services such as Medicaid and unemployment benefits, has also taken a toll on Maryland's fiscal health, creating a \$1.9 billion state deficit and drawing a warning from Governor O'Malley this week that state layoffs are in the offing.

Maryland taxpayers will see a direct piece of the recovery with a \$500 payroll tax cut per person and \$1000 per family to apply to 95 percent of workers. State fiscal relief will be allotted through existing formulas and directed by the state to worthy and needed projects that are also long-term investments. Specific state allocations are still being determined. The legislation contains no congressionally-directed projects.

"In Maryland we can expect to see the impact of this legislation in tax relief for workers and families, the creation of jobs and investment in key priorities, such as transportation and clean water infrastructure, new energy technologies being developed in our state, and funding for education and school construction," **said Hoyer.** "In addition, it is targeted to protect vital services aimed at helping workers hurt by the economy, including unemployment benefits, workforce development programs, food stamps and health care."

The drafted package contains targeted efforts in:

- Clean, Efficient, American Energy
- Transforming our Economy with Science and Technology
- Modernizing Roads, Bridges, Transit and Waterways
- Education for the 21st Century
- Tax Cuts to Make Work Pay and Create Jobs
- Lowering Healthcare Costs
- Helping Workers Hurt by the Economy
- Saving Public Sector Jobs and Protect Vital Services

Other elements of the bill include \$6.7 billion for renovations and repairs to federal buildings, including at least \$6 billion focused on increasing energy efficiency and conservation; \$650 million to continue the coupon program to enable American households to convert from analog television transmission to digital transmission; and \$6 billion for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, which is a program that has granted loans for efforts to restore the Chesapeake Bay.□

**Hoyer warned that economic recovery would take time, but stressed the need to maintain a commitment to fiscal responsibility and balanced budgets in the long-term:** &quot;The depth of the economic crisis facing us today means that even with this recovery package, we can still expect the unemployment rate to rise slightly and deficits to increase. However, the consequences of inaction are far worse, starting with double digit unemployment and even deeper deficits. This bill is needed to stop our economy's downward spiral so that we may then address the underlying financial crisis. Once our economy stabilizes, we must renew our pledge of fiscal responsibility and make the tough choices necessary to rein in deficits and restore balanced budgets.&quot;

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